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Chairperson: Mr. Torrington (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Guyana)

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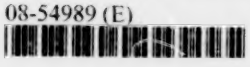

In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Torrington (Guyana), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 54: Operational activities for development (*continued*) (A/63/71-E/2008/46, A/63/85-E/2008/83, A/63/201, A/63/205 and A/63/207)

1. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (China) said that the world was facing unprecedentedly complex challenges in the development arena: the worsening imbalance in the global economy; the acute problems of financial, energy and food security; climate change; environmental degradation; and disease and frequent natural disasters. With the gap between North and South and between rich and poor widening, eradication of poverty remained an elusive dream. The United Nations development system still had a long way to go and daunting difficulties to overcome in order to assist countries in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Given that grim reality, priority must be given to the major issues that would impact the overall situation.

2. First, United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies should fully utilize the political consensus reached at the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, and accord top priority to their development functions in order to ensure effective implementation. General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system had set out a clear direction for those activities. Funds, programmes and specialized agencies should clearly define their division of labour and responsibilities and formulate specific workplans so that Member States could have a full picture of progress in implementation, identify gaps and obstacles promptly and provide policy guidance.

3. Second, increasing funding for the United Nations development system was an essential step towards enhancing the global partnership for development. Adequate, stable and predictable core resources continued to be the bedrock of United Nations operational activities for development. The decline in core funding noted by the Secretary-General in his report (A/63/201) had not only forced funds and programmes to devote most of their energy to competing for contributions for non-core resources and meeting the requirements of the donor countries, but might also jeopardize the multilateral, neutral and grant nature of United Nations assistance. Funds, programmes and specialized agencies should endeavour to correct the ratio of core resources to overall resources, and donors that were able to do so should implement in earnest the Monterrey Consensus and increase their contribution to core resources.

4. Third, national capacity-building should become a priority for United Nations operational activities for development. The United Nations should make greater use of indigenous experts and technologies in recipient countries, promote transfer of technology and investment, implement the national execution modality on a wider scale, and develop operable and sustainable programmes for capacity-building tailored to the countries in question.

5. Fourth, reform of the United Nations operational activities for development should be aimed at enhancing their integration and flexibility so as to meet the specific development needs of recipient countries. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the assistance delivered by the United Nations should be measured by the results achieved in helping developing countries implement their national development strategies. Reform should emphasize recipient countries' leading role and ownership of assistance projects. Resident coordinators should promote coordination and synergy on the part of the United Nations country team, consistent with the Four Ones approach.

6. South-South cooperation was an important component of China's external cooperation, and it planned to deepen and expand its cooperation with other developing countries in the future, as had been announced at the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals.

7. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) observed that, as noted in the Secretary-General's report on trends in contributions to operational activities for development (A/63/201), most donors had failed to meet their commitments to increase official development assistance (ODA). It was to be hoped that the current financial crisis would not put further pressure on ODA flows, thus discouraging the efforts to reverse the downward trend of the last decade. The decline in multilateral aid and the rise in earmarking of funds for

specific initiatives affected the neutrality and impartiality of the aid channelled through the United Nations system and made United Nations operational activities a less predictable and secure source of funding for developing countries. It was frustrating to see that out of US$ 5.6 billion in United Nations development assistance, core resources accounted for only US$ 965 million. His delegation had noted the Secretary-General's efforts to sensitize donors to the need to increase ODA levels and had observed with interest that he was considering launching a good multilateral donorship initiative as a response to the outcomes of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (Doha review conference) and the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. His delegation would be willing to examine any proposal that the Secretary-General wished to submit in that regard.

8. With respect to the report on the implications of aligning the strategic planning cycles of United Nations funds and programmes (A/63/207), his delegation viewed with great interest the possibility of changing the comprehensive policy review from a three-year to a four-year cycle and saw merit in the arguments put forward by the Secretary-General regarding cost reduction and allowing time to conduct a better-informed review of the implementation of the United Nations funds and programmes. Brazil was open to considering the options presented in the report with a view to identifying those that best met the operational requirements of the programmes and funds concerned. In order to ensure the most effective implementation of the policy guidance imparted by the General Assembly, the secretariats of the agencies, funds and programmes concerned should be offered adequate time to prepare and discuss their strategic plans with Member States. Undertaking the comprehensive reviews on a quadrennial basis would have advantages in that regard.

9. South-South cooperation was one of the main features of Brazil's foreign policy. Brazilian technical cooperation had been predominantly geared towards the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries, although it also cooperated with other middle-income countries. That cooperation was demand-driven and strictly observed the principle of ownership. Brazil favoured triangular cooperation as a means of optimizing its capacity to deliver assistance. Under that mode of cooperation, it had undertaken health and development projects in various countries in partnership with Argentina, Canada, Indonesia, Norway, South Africa, Spain and the United States of America. Brazil had also entered into cooperation arrangements with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank to support, for instance, distribution of school meals in Haiti, and with the International Labour Organization to promote rural development.

10. Important decisions should be taken during the current session on the mobilization of increased and predictable resources for operational activities, as well as on the alignment of the strategic planning cycles of United Nations funds and programmes. His delegation hoped that Member States would continue to support South-South Cooperation as an important complement to traditional flows of cooperation.

11. **Mr. Gharibi** (Iran) said that his delegation concurred with the position of the Group of 77 and China regarding the overarching importance of General Assembly resolution 62/208 and the need for its comprehensive, effective and faithful implementation. Iran firmly believed that the triennial reviews should determine the course of action for United Nations operational activities and that they should not be superseded or pre-empted by other processes.

12. The United Nations should have a stronger role in advancing the development agenda of the developing countries through full realization of all internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. However, the principle of national ownership and leadership must be respected in practice in United Nations operational activities for development. The planning and implementation of the United Nations development agenda should remain apolitical and free from conditionality. Attempts to politicize operational activities by prioritizing certain cross-cutting issues would undermine the principles of neutrality and impartiality in the delivery of development assistance.

13. The decline in ODA noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/201) was cause for serious concern, particularly in the light of the current financial turmoil in the developed countries. His delegation looked forward to the upcoming Doha Review Conference and urged the donor community to take appropriate measures to close the gap between promises and performance. The decline in multilateral

aid, the growth in non-core funding and the rise in earmarking of funds were also disturbing trends.

14. His delegation supported any reforms aimed at enhancing the ability of the United Nations to meet the needs of recipient countries in an efficient and integrated manner. Certain mechanisms agreed in the triennial comprehensive policy review could respond to legitimate demands to make the United Nations system more coherent and effective. The review also provided policy guidance that could help overcome the current disparities in funding for development activities.

15. South-South cooperation was at the heart of his Government's economic and development activities at the regional and interregional levels. His delegation welcomed the adoption of the fourth cooperation framework for South-South cooperation and hoped that its implementation would lead to institutionalization of the three-in-one global structure envisioned in the framework.

16. Two important events relating to South-South cooperation would take place in 2009: the sixteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. Given the current global economic environment, that Conference should be used as an occasion for formulating the strategies needed to maintain and further strengthen the status of the South as a strong engine of global growth, together with practical guidelines for the role of the United Nations system in promoting and scaling up South-South cooperation. His delegation looked forward to launching discussions in the General Assembly on a resolution based on the recent report of the President of the High-Level Committee.

17. **Mr. García González** (El Salvador) said that it was impossible to separate the discussion of United Nations operational activities for development from the current global crisis affecting the financial, economic, energy, environmental and food sectors. The world was facing an unprecedented crisis of confidence, which had destabilized the global economy. The international community must therefore join forces to re-establish confidence. Doing so, however, did not mean returning to the past or trying to manage the economy of the twenty-first century with the economic instruments of the twentieth century. A profound renovation of the entire global financial and economic system was needed.

18. In that context, El Salvador reaffirmed the importance of the vision and commitments assumed by the General Assembly in resolution 62/208 with respect to enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and credibility of the United Nations system through the provision of adequate and timely resources to enable it to carry out its mandates. The legitimacy of United Nations development activities derived from the national level. Each country had primary responsibility for its own economic and social development. Recognizing that, his Government had adopted various measures aimed at promoting policies, developing strategies, implementing plans and mobilizing financial resources at the national and international level for sustainable development.

19. Official development assistance was an important complement to other sources of development financing for countries with limited capacity to attract direct private investment and for middle-income countries. The Consensus of El Salvador on Development Cooperation with Middle-Income Countries, adopted in October 2007, had underscored the commitment of the international community to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. His delegation stressed the importance of continued support for middle-income countries in their fight against poverty and invited the international community to consider more effective ways of assisting such countries, including the implementation of innovative mechanisms for providing more targeted cooperation and enabling them to consolidate the development gains achieved thus far.

20. The Doha Review Conference would afford a valuable opportunity to demonstrate the political commitment of the international community to solve pressing development problems. El Salvador called on Member States not to miss that opportunity to work together to build a better world. His Government also underlined the urgent need to increase ODA and other development resources substantially. He commended those countries that had met or exceeded their ODA commitments and encouraged others to take concrete steps to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national income to ODA.

21. **Mr. Wagle** (Nepal) emphasized the importance of continued and effective utilization of the wealth of United Nations expertise at the national and regional levels. General Assembly resolution 62/208 had provided constructive guidelines for result-oriented development cooperation. Development activities should be planned in accordance with national priorities and leadership. His delegation attached great importance to enhancing the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to national circumstances and country-specific needs. Equally important was the ready availability of reliable data to facilitate effective monitoring and reporting of resource requirements and results of operational activities for development. The United Nations system should continue to strengthen its capacity in that regard.

22. In the current context of financial turmoil, climate change challenges and the food crisis, there was a need to improve preparedness for and predictability of new development challenges and requirements, particularly in the least developed countries. Comprehensive development and sustainability were critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. Concerted national and international efforts and effective support and follow-up by the United Nations system were needed to implement specific partnership programmes such as the Brussels Programme of Action or the Almaty Programme of Action in a timely fashion. In that connection, Nepal reiterated its commitment to South-South cooperation and partnerships.

23. It was a matter of concern that financial contributions were decreasing at a time when expectations for United Nations operational activities were rising. Adequate resources and sustained support from development partners were needed in order to implement development activities effectively. Without significantly augmenting both core and non-core funding and assuring the predictability of resources, Member States could not expect strengthened capacity in the United Nations system. It was to be hoped that the international community would take accelerated action to meet ODA commitments in the time leading up to the Doha Review Conference.

24. With a view to making development sustainable, participatory, inclusive and people-responsive, the Government of Nepal had created policies and programmes that emphasized public-private partnership, gender mainstreaming, rural cooperatives and community-managed development programmes. Nepal believed that development would lead to stability and to prosperity, justice and peace. Achieving development would require the engagement of all stakeholders, as well as greate, investment in development infrastructure, strengthened economic institutions, and a viable technological base. With predictable funding and sustained international partnership, the world's shared development ambitions could be achieved.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.